

# The Co-operative Academy of Manchester

Plant Hill Road, Higher Blackley, Manchester, M9 0WQ

**Inspection dates** 5–6 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Building on the legacy of previous senior leaders, the Principal and leaders at all levels provide outstanding leadership.
- There is an extremely positive culture for learning in which all staff set high expectations for students' behaviour and achievement.
- Students show pride in the academy. They commit fully to the academy's core principles of 'fairness, ambition and respect'.
- Teaching has improved as a result of excellent performance management procedures and good training, coaching and support.
- Good teaching has raised students' achievement significantly.
- Students make good progress. In 2014 attainment at GCSE met the average for all schools and was well above the average for sponsored academies.
- Students' behaviour is good. Students are considerate and respectful.
- The work of the academy to improve attendance and keep students safe is outstanding. Students feel extremely safe and attendance is very high.
- Sixth-form provision is good. Students achieve success and are well prepared for the next steps in their education or employment.
- Students receive excellent information, advice and guidance to help them make the right choice of course and career.
- Governors know the school extremely well and provide excellent challenge and support to leaders in their drive for further improvement.
- The academy has been transformed. It has raised aspiration for the local community and improved the lives of students. There is very strong capacity to continue this improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Middle-ability students do not always make rapid progress in mathematics. They are not always provided with work that is challenging enough.
- Questioning is not always used well enough in lessons, in order to probe students' understanding and extend their learning.
- Students' oral skills are not always developed as well as they could be.
- There are times when students are rushed through tasks without having time to complete them to the highest possible standard.
- Some boys are not always engaged fully in their learning, particularly in mixed-ability classes.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in most subjects, all year groups and in the sixth form. They scrutinised a range of students’ work. They also observed an assembly and tutor time.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, governors, teachers and the Director of the Co-operative Trust. Inspectors met with groups of students and spoke informally with many more students during lessons and break-times. Inspectors spoke with the main alternative provider by telephone.
- Inspectors considered 17 questionnaires completed by staff and 132 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) made in the last 365 days.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including self-evaluation, monitoring information and improvement planning. They analysed progress data, looked at a range of policies and checked safeguarding systems and procedures to promote students’ well-being.

## Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Julie Yarwood

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Royston Halford

Additional Inspector

Bernard Robinson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The academy opened in September 2010 with the specialism of finance and business. It is sponsored by the Co-operative Group and has recently merged into a multi-academy trust with seven other academies. The academy is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It has a small sixth form.
- Two-thirds of the students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is much higher than the national figure. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to this school for students entitled to free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and speaking English as an additional language are higher than those found nationally. A significant proportion is at an early stage of learning English. There are 32 different languages spoken.
- The proportion of disabled students with those who have special educational needs is much higher than the national average.
- The academy holds numerous awards including the Food for Life Partnership Award, Green Flag Award, and Information, Advice and Guidance Gold Award.
- Thirteen students are educated off-site where they study mathematics, English and practical, work-related courses. Alternative providers include the Manchester Pupil Referral Unit, Bethal College and Lighthouse.
- The academy works in partnership with a number of schools in the area through the North Manchester Partnership of Schools. It collaborates with the Skills Solution Training Agency to enhance the curriculum and work-experience opportunities for students. The Co-operative Group provides work experience and placements, apprenticeships and employment opportunities for post-16 students. The academy also provides training for students through Schools Direct.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection, a new Principal has been appointed and the senior leadership team has been re-organised; there have been other new appointments to the leadership team and in various subjects across the academy.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
  - using questioning more effectively in lessons to probe students' understanding and extend their learning
  - making sure that students have sufficient time to complete the tasks they are given in lessons to the highest possible standard
  - providing more opportunities for students to develop their oral skills.
- Raise achievement further in mathematics by:
  - ensuring that teaching challenges all students in middle-ability sets more.
- Further improve boys' engagement in lessons by:
  - increasing challenge and support, especially in mixed-ability classes at Key Stage 3.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The academy has been transformed since opening four years ago. It has an excellent reputation and has raised aspiration in the local community. Students show pride in the academy and do their best to uphold the core principles of 'fairness, ambition and respect'.
- Building on the legacy of previous leaders, an extremely positive culture for learning has been sustained. Teachers are keen to share best practice and support each other's improvement.
- The Principal and academy leadership team provide very strong leadership and this has the potential to drive further improvement. Self-evaluation is reflective and accurate; it provides a strong foundation for the well-targeted improvement planning.
- The academy is inclusive, with a clear moral purpose to ensure all students achieve well. The promotion of equal opportunities, tackling of discrimination and fostering of excellent relations permeate all aspects of the academy's work.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students are keen to learn about differences in culture and faith and show respect for each other. They consider moral issues in many subjects. They learn about British values and thoughtfully consider ethical issues. Sixth-form students are excellent role models in promoting positive relationships through their work with younger students.
- Middle leaders make a significant contribution to improvement. There are clear lines of accountability, so all leaders know what is expected of them and their teams. The creation of the 'shadow leadership team' enables middle leaders to learn from senior leaders and develops their leadership skills effectively.
- There are excellent systems to manage the performance of teachers. Teachers have challenging targets for their own performance and that of the students they teach. Personalised development plans ensure teachers' training needs and career aspirations are furthered.
- Teaching is improving strongly as a result of robust checking on quality, effective feedback and good professional development. Newly qualified teachers receive excellent support and guidance to improve their practice.
- The curriculum prepares students extremely well for the next steps in their education and for life in modern Britain. It is enhanced through various enrichment activities such as the police cadets, work experience and after-school clubs. Off-site provision is used carefully to enable students to achieve as well as possible.
- The quality of information, advice and guidance given to students about their choice of courses and career options is outstanding. As a result almost all students go into suitable further education, training or employment.
- The academy has strong community links and it is becoming increasingly popular. Parents who responded to Parent View are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of education and leadership. Partnership arrangements with other schools enable staff to share good practice and links with other providers enrich the curriculum for students and extend opportunities for work-related learning.
- The impact of support from the sponsor and the academy trust is excellent. The Co-operative Group provides wide opportunities to extend students' experiences and support their personal development.
- The impact of purposeful and highly effective leadership can be seen in students' achievement and attendance, which have risen significantly in the four years since the academy opened. Students make good progress and their attendance is now very high. There is very strong capacity to continue to improve.
- The academy's procedures for safeguarding students are exemplary.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors provide excellent support and challenge to leaders. They have an in-depth understanding of the academy's performance, including teaching and students' achievement, and a clear vision for further improvement. They ensure that the Principal's performance and the performance of staff are managed effectively. Pay progression is carefully considered and only proceeds where there is clear evidence that it is warranted.
  - Governors monitor the spending and impact of additional pupil premium funding closely to ensure eligible students make gains in their achievement and personal development.
  - Active engagement with stakeholders and the community ensures the academy has a high profile, makes best use of local resources and provides valued facilities and events for local residents.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. Students do their best to uphold the behaviour policy, which helps them to consider their behaviour and make changes to improve it. As one student said, 'The academy sets you up for life; it helps you learn, teaches you values and develops the skills you need for life.'
- Students show pride in the academy; they look smart and respect the environment. They appreciate the high-quality display and are keen to live up to the academy's mantra of 'backbone not wishbone', which encourages them to 'dig deep' and persevere.
- Behaviour around the academy is orderly and calm. Students are considerate as they move between lessons and behave well in shared areas. They arrive punctually to lessons and settle to their work quickly.
- Students show respect for their teachers. On rare occasions when the behaviour of a few students disturbs learning for others, it is dealt with quickly.
- Exclusion from the academy has declined significantly since 2012 when there were a few permanent exclusions and fixed-term exclusions were much higher than average. The use of internal exclusion is reducing and, when used, it is well planned to ensure students continue their class work and receive support to amend their behaviour.
- Students make a good contribution to the academy and the wider community. All are able to give their views through 'Student Voice' representatives. Those involved in the Community Engagement Team work energetically to put on events which are valued by local residents. Students are rightly proud of their fund raising and charity work.
- There are some occasions when a few students, particularly boys, do not engage fully in their learning and lack enthusiasm. This occurs mainly in some mixed-ability classes at Key Stage 3, when they are not always provided with an appropriate level of challenge or support to build on their prior learning.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Students' safety and well-being is promoted through all aspects of the academy's work.
- Students thrive in the caring and supportive environment and feel extremely safe. Positive relationships ensure that students feel confident to ask for personal support if they need it.
- Students demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including from extremism and radicalisation, risks associated with drink and drugs and by engagement in gangs.
- Students have good understanding of different types of bullying including bullying based on racist and homophobic prejudice or appearance. They told inspectors that there is not any physical bullying or intimidation in the academy. Students know how to protect themselves from bullying when using websites and social media.
- Attendance has improved significantly due to rigorous tracking systems and excellent work with families and support for students. Attendance is now well-above average.
- The academy has developed strong partnerships with alternative providers and monitors students' safety and attendance carefully. Any absence is followed up immediately.
- Child-protection procedures are rigorous and are supported by strong links with external agencies to ensure expert support for vulnerable students. Those who are in the care of the local authority are supported extremely well to develop their personal and social skills and achieve to the best of their ability. All staff have received relevant safeguarding and child-protection training.
- Virtually all (99%) of parents who responded to Parent View said their child feels safe in the academy and is well looked after. The vast majority said the academy deals effectively with bullying and makes sure students are well behaved.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Good teaching has raised achievement significantly.
- Teachers create a positive climate for learning. They have good subject knowledge and a vibrant and positive approach. They set high expectations for students' behaviour and achievement. Students grow in confidence and feel their contributions are valued because, as one student put it, 'Teachers are supportive and respectful.'
- Work in students' books is well presented. Work shows good progress over time and is at an appropriate standard for the age and ability of students. Teachers provide good-quality feedback so students have a

secure understanding of their targets and know how to improve their work. However, there are occasionally times when students are rushed through tasks without having sufficient time to complete them to the highest possible standard.

- Information from assessment is used effectively to inform the next steps in teaching and plan additional support for students who are falling behind. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to support students who need extra help in lessons, including those with special educational needs.
- While outcomes in English have been much better than in mathematics in the past, teaching in mathematics shows recent improvement. Students in the middle-ability sets are making better progress, but there is still further work to be done to make sure they are challenged and build on their knowledge and skills rapidly in mathematics.
- Teachers often use questioning well to encourage students to talk about and reflect on their learning. Questioning is less effective sometimes when opportunities to deepen students' thinking and extend their understanding are missed.
- Reading, writing and mathematical skills are taught well in many subjects. However, students sometimes have limited opportunities to develop their oral skills, extend their vocabulary and talk about ideas.
- Students who speak English as an additional language are extremely well supported to develop their knowledge of English language, both in class and through additional support. Older students take 'English for Speakers of Other Languages' courses and qualifications, which support them well when applying for further education courses. They also help younger students speaking English as an additional language to learn English and help them to settle into the academy.
- Students who are eligible for pupil premium benefit from a range of additional support and enrichment activities that successfully raise their achievement and improve their well-being.
- The vast majority of parents (96%) who responded to Parent View say their child is taught well.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' achievement has improved significantly in the four years since the academy opened. The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSEs at grade C and above including English and mathematics has improved from well-below average to the national average for all schools and well above the average for sponsored academies in 2014.
- Students enter the academy with attainment that is well-below average. They make good progress in the vast majority of subjects and exceptional progress in English. Where progress has been slower, for example in geography and mathematics, leaders have taken action to improve teaching and raise achievement.
- The academy has revised the approach to early entry for GCSE in mathematics; very few students are entered early unless it is to their benefit.
- The most able students in the academy make good progress from their starting points. They are given appropriate additional challenge in lessons to extend their learning.
- Lower-ability students make very good progress to achieve standards that are close to the national average. However, students in the middle-ability sets do not always make the same rapid progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Girls do better than boys in most subjects. There are times when boys do not engage well with learning, especially in the mixed-ability classes at Key Stage 3. Their engagement in learning improves at Key Stage 4.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs do well. Those with moderate learning and behaviour difficulties make good progress from their various starting points. They receive encouragement and support in class and small groups that help them grow in confidence and fill gaps in their learning.
- Students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress in all subjects because they receive excellent support in learning English.
- The achievement gaps between disadvantaged students and all students nationally have closed dramatically. The academy was in the top 1% of schools for closing the gap in 2013 and this is continuing. Students entitled to free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority make exceptionally good progress from their starting points in English. They have not done so well in mathematics in the past, but their achievement is improving alongside other students in the academy due to better teaching.
- In 2013 disadvantaged students were around three-quarters of a grade behind all students nationally in English and over a grade behind in mathematics. This gap has closed and disadvantaged students are attaining in line with others in the academy and at the national average for all students, at both Key

Stage 3 and Key Stage 4.

- Students in alternative curriculum provision make good progress. Every effort is made to ensure they achieve English and mathematics qualifications alongside vocational subjects.

### The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form is a small but growing provision that was originally set up to support students that were at risk of becoming unemployed and now effectively steers them into further education, training or employment. It is led well to ensure that students' needs are met fully and they achieve as well as possible. Leaders have a clear vision and action plans for further improvement.
- The sixth form has grown in popularity due to its success and the fact that the curriculum meets students' needs exceptionally well. Students gain from opportunities for work experience facilitated by the Co-operative Group and strong links with other businesses.
- Students complete their courses, make good progress and gain qualifications relevant to their aspirations and interests. Excellent information, advice and guidance helped all students leaving the sixth form in 2014 into further education, training or employment. The majority went to further education colleges, work or apprenticeships and for the first time last year, two students went straight into university places.
- Students with special educational needs and those at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language are supported exceptionally well so that they achieve success.
- Students feel valued and receive excellent personal support that helps them develop skills for life and grow in confidence.
- Students make a good contribution to the academy, for example by supporting younger students to develop English language skills, as buddies for reading and running enrichment clubs. They do a lot to promote the academy's values of fairness, ambition and respect by providing good role models for younger students.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	136174
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	442430

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	632
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	34
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Moira Lees
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Brice
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 February 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 795 3005
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